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Briton held as spy in Moscow

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NEWS



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A BRITON has been arrested in Moscow and is being held for investigation on spy charges. Full details of the case are not yet known as the Russians have remained silent on the case since the arrest a few days ago.

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But first impressions are that the Soviet Secret Police regard the affair seriously, and that the man is under almost continuous interrogation both on allegations of espionage, and activities contrary to the interests of the State.

The Briton, whose name is Brooke, was on a visit to the Soviet Union as part of an invited good-will delegation, made up of professional people. His wife also went on the trip. As far as is known there has been no question of her being arrested.

Mr. Brooke apparently was arrested in the Moscow flat of a Soviet citizen after the Secret Police broke in and seized what is claimed to be evidence.

One allegation may be that Mr. Brooke was carrying material from a resident of England to a Soviet citizen. It is rare for a British citizen to visit a Soviet citizen's home, so any meeting of this nature would almost certainly raise suspicion with the Russian police.

CPYRGHT *The next step*

In London a study of the case so far and the background of the arrested man has produced no evidence of why he should have been arrested.

Presumably the next step—if this has not been done already — will be for the British Embassy in Moscow to seek an interview with Mr. Brooke and also, if possible, to see whether he can have legal representation.

The last British citizen to be involved in serious spy trouble was businessman Mr. Greville Wynne, who first disappeared on a visit to Hungary. After his arrest there in November 1962 he reappeared in Moscow for a showpiece trial where he was sentenced to eight years' jail.

After 18 months in a Soviet prison Mr. Wynne was released as part of a Berlin frontier bargain in which Gordon Lonsdale, the Soviet master spy, was handed back to the Russians by Britain.

Three major possibilities emerge from this latest arrest:

1. That the arrest is due to a misunderstanding and that Mr. Brooke has unwittingly, if unwisely, contravened the general understanding that visiting Westerners are careful to whom they speak, and especially to whom they pass messages.

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APR 29 1965

CPYRGHT *Subtle messages*

Even if he were simply passing on good wishes from an emigre in Britain to a family still in Moscow, it would invite stern rebuke from the authorities, and possibly also arrest.

Such apparently innocent behaviour could, in some circumstances, be used as a method of communicating messages containing subtleties that Mr. Brooke could not comprehend.

2. That the Russians believe they have uncovered a big Western spy ring and the case warrants top-of-the-league publicity treatment. In such an event, Mr. Brooke would be liable to lengthy questioning before any public statement were made, and other arrests might follow.

(In London early this morning there was no certain knowledge that any Soviet citizens had been charged, though several had been questioned. In the circumstances of Mr. Brooke's detention, however, a further arrest—of a Muscovite—seems possible.)

3. That the Russians are making an arrest so they can have a hostage in reserve. If a big spy case were to break in Britain and the result were the capture of a Soviet agent, then it might be a propaganda retort if the Russians announced they had caught the British at the same work.

Details of the case and its implications have been communicated to the Prime Minister's office. Meanwhile, the British Embassy in Moscow has been instructed to do all possible to achieve Mr. Brooke's release on the basis that there must have been a genuine misunderstanding.

Shortly after the arrest arrangements were started to have Mr. Brooke's wife flown home to England.

APR 29 1965